

- (2) Review and evaluate the findings and recommendations outlined in the Maddox and Ferguson report completed in September 1996;
- (3) Provide an inventory of existing hardware and software in the court system statewide, including the age of and proposed replacement schedules, for personal computers, laptop computers, mainframe and midrange computers, servers, terminals, printers, and communications infrastructure devices;
- (4) Assess the effectiveness of existing computer-based applications, including the district attorney and public defender case management system, courtroom automation, the civil case processing system, and the financial management system, and outline any changes that may be needed to meet the future needs of the court system;
- (5) Develop an architectural strategy and quality assurance review that is consistent with existing State standards;
- (6) Identify areas where the use of information technology would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the court system in providing services to the public;
- (7) Develop a long-term implementation plan and cost analysis for the new Magistrates Criminal Information System; and
- (8) Recommend alternative five-year proposals for implementing the court system's technology plan, including a cost analysis of each alternative that specifies the order of priority in which various projects should be implemented.

The Administrative Office of the Courts shall report on the strategic information systems and technology plan developed pursuant to this section to the Chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and the Chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall make an interim report by April 1, 1999, and a final report by May 1, 1999.

(c) The Judicial Department may use up to the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in funds appropriated to the Department for the 1998-99 fiscal year to contract for consultant services in the development of the strategic information systems and technology plan required by this section. Prior to expending these funds, the Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, the Chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees, and the Chairs of the Senate and House Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety on the consultant selected and the proposed uses of these funds.

(d) This section is effective when this act becomes law.

Requested by: Senators Gulley, Ballance, Rand, Wellons, Representatives Justus, Kiser, Thompson, Sexton

STUDY OF PUBLIC DEFENDER PROGRAMS

Section 16.1. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall study the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the public defender programs established in 11 judicial districts. The report shall include: